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SUBJECT: CPA: JDB Working Well, OAGs Still a Problem

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: On July 18, the Technical Committee of the Joint Defense Board (JDB) addressed the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) and reported that establishment and deployment of the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) was almost complete, although training remained an issue. The Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) is no longer in the north, and the redeployment of Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) out of the south is well ahead of schedule, but still "tricky" around the oil fields.

¶2. (SBU) The committee emphasized that other armed groups (OAGs) would remain a threat until the OAG Commission had counted them and a proper Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program begins. After being pressed, the SAF admitted to continuing to support the unaligned OAGs with food and medicine, although not weapons, until the DDR process is complete. For the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the committee said that the JIUs, SPLA, and SAF are developing a plan to quickly deal with the LRA if talks fail. End Summary.

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JDB Working Well, JIUs in Place  
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¶3. (U) Comprised of eight members split evenly between SAF and SPLA, the Technical Committee is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the JDB. Its offices are now fully operational and it is supported by a staff of 42. During the presentation, the committee members from both sides worked well together and clearly had established a good rapport.

¶4. (U) The committee explained that it had now established many of the ground rules for the JIUs, including uniform design, insignia, pay (75 percent premium pay), code of conduct, and method of operations. The two issues that remained were equipment -- currently all JIU troops bring the equipment issued them by their respective armies, leading to inequities -- and training. Training was more difficult because they had no budget and therefore no way to plan. Without joint training, they opined, the units could not really function as an integrated whole. The only joint training that had taken place so far was demining training in Kenya, and those groups were already starting to map minefields and begin work.

¶5. (U) Virtually all 39,500 JIU troops, evenly split between SAF and SPLA, were now deployed and salaries were being paid. The breakdown of deployed JIU troops is as follows: 24,000 in Southern Sudan, 6,000 in Nuba Mountains, 6,000 in Southern Blue Nile, 3,000 in Khartoum (in Soba and Jebel Aulia), and 600 in Abyei.

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Redeployment Ahead, But Not Around Oil Fields  
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¶6. (U) The Technical Committee said that redeployment was now well ahead of schedule, with all SPLA troops withdrawn from the north and almost all SAF troops out of the south. The SAF had completely pulled out of greater Equatoria and the last contingent of SAF in greater Bahr Al-Ghazal was awaiting redeployment. The committee

said the SAF headquarters in Juba and Wau had been turned over to the JIUs and the headquarters in Malakal would be transferred soon. Redeployment in the greater Upper Nile region was further behind, and the oil fields were the last (pent to the oil field regions.

17. (SBU) The oil fields remain a potential trouble spot, with a relatively small area hosting troops from JIUs, SAF, SPLA, OAGs aligned to either the SAF or the SPLA but not integrated, unaligned OAGs, and other northern security forces. A few days after the presentation, this was highlighted by a small misunderstanding between a SAF soldier and some OAGs that turned deadly. COMMENT: The fact that the incident was dealt with quickly and did not lead to further escalation is a testament to the level of confidence between the SPLA and the SAF. END COMMENT.

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OAG Major Threat to Peace  
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18. (U) Both the SAF and SPLA representatives agreed that OAGs remained a major threat to peace, and would remain a problem until the CPA's mandated OAG committee was formed and a full DDR program could proceed. The OAG committee was charged with counting all OAGs, recording their status -- SAF-aligned, SPLA-aligned, or to be disarmed -- and mapping them. The committee estimated that there were 45,000 OAG troops at the end of the war, most under the banner of the South Sudan Defense Force (SSDF) and supported by the SAF. Of these, 15,000 are being integrated into the SPLA and 6,000 have declared for the SAF. The SAF will redeploy 3,000 of these troops north, with the remaining 3,000 assigned to JIUs: 1,000 in each of

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the south's three regions. That left 19,000 which remained unaligned. The SAF explained that while they supported these groups in the war, they had no capacity to integrate them and the groups had refused to move north.

19. (SBU) The SAF representatives then admitted that they were continuing to provide support for these 19,000 troops in the form of food and medicine. In a shift from the overwhelming congenial tone of the meeting, the SPLA representatives responded with alarm and said that they had not heard this before. One SPLA representative explained he was from Pibor, where the SSDF is causing problems, and that any support to this OAG allows it to operate more easily. The SAF responded that it would continue to do this until DDR takes place, because the alternative, a hungry and sick armed group, was worse. They emphasized that no arms were being provided, only humanitarian assistance.

STEINFELD